

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks. Claims 1-7 have been canceled. Claims 8-12 have been added. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner objected to the specification for lacking proper headings. Applicant has amended the specification accordingly. The Examiner objected to the claims for being unclear. Applicant has re-written claims 1-4 as new claim 8 and claims 5-7 as new claims 9-11. Claim 12 has been added to further describe a feature of the invention. Applicant submits that the new claims overcome the Examiner's objections.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-7 under 35 USC 1-2(b) as being anticipated by Lee et al. Applicant respectfully traverses. Claim 8 has been written to include the elements of claims 1-4, now canceled. Claims 9-11 depend from claim 8.

The device for cleaning hollow vessels, namely baby bottles, as shown in Lee has multiple strips of a soft, elastic material, particularly silicone, on the outside of which strips elements having cleaning bristles are attached. This device is able to spread out after having been introduced into the baby bottle through the neck of the bottle, in order to be able to effectively clean the inside walls of the bottle. So that the device of Lee also spreads out when pressed down onto the bottom of the bottle, it has thinned regions of the material of the silicone strip at some points, so that bending can take place at these points. However, bending takes place only at a few points, while the shape of the device remains essentially unchanged in the other regions, before and after the radial expansion caused by pressing down onto the bottom of the bottle. For this reason, the part of the device indicated with the reference symbol 2a in Figure 4, for example, must be adapted to the inside wall of the baby bottle right from the start, as can be easily seen from the fact that the curvature of the region 2a of the device practically corresponds to the curvature of the inside wall of the baby bottle. This curvature is maintained even after the

device is pressed down onto the bottom of the bottle, as can be seen in Figure 5, for example. The device of Lee is therefore not suitable for adapting to just any shape of vessels; instead, the device must be adapted to the baby bottle to be cleaned, right from the start. If one were to attempt, in contrast, to clean a particularly bulbous decanter for wine with the device according to Lee, no efficient cleaning could be expected, since the silicone strips with the cleaning bristles affixed to them are not suitable for adapting to the inside wall of the vessel in every region.

Proceeding from Lee, one is therefore confronted with the task of improving the device itself further, in such a manner that cleaning of almost any vessels, particularly also extremely bulbous vessels, becomes possible. This task is accomplished, according to the invention, by means of a loop made of a flat plastic strip, which belongs to the device, and is connected with cleaning material, whereby the plastic strip is configured in two or more layers in regions of greater bending resistance.

Differing from Lee, according to the invention, not just individual bending points are provided, but instead, the device has border regions having greater and lesser bending resistance, as can be seen particularly well in the figures. In the region in which the plastic strip connects with the handle, it is configured in multiple layers, for example three layers, so that it has relatively great stiffness. In this region, great stiffness is particularly advantageous, since it is possible to transfer higher forces from the handle to the cleaning device in this manner. On the other hand, in the lower region of the device, the plastic strip is supposed to be configured to be less stiff, for example only in one layer. This ensures that this region can come to lie against almost any shape of vessel, so that even decanters having a very bulbous shape can be cleaned from the inside (cf. Figure 2). Finally, transition regions having medium stiffness, in which the plastic strip is configured in two layers, for example, can also be provided between the regions having particularly great and particularly low stiffness, as claimed in new claim 12. The one-layer, two-layer, or multi-layer configuration of the plastic strip furthermore

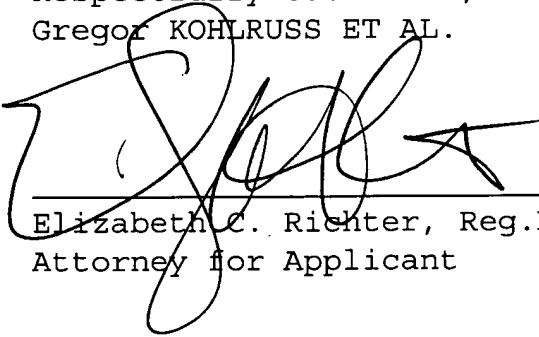
represents a particularly simple possibility for adjusting the bending resistance of the device in the various regions as desired.

Such a measure is not anticipated by Lee, as explained above. Furthermore, Lee also does not give any inspiration for configuring specific limited regions of the plastic strip in two or multiple layers. Instead, the device according to Lee merely has a few bending points, but these do not allow optimal adaptation to the inside walls of the vessel.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the new claims are patentable over Lee.

Applicants also submit herewith an English translation of  
the International Preliminary Report on Patentability.

Respectfully submitted,  
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Enclosures:

Copy of Petition for two-month extension of time  
English translation of International Preliminary Report on Patentability

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with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope  
addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria,  
VA 22313-1450, on June 12, 2008.

  
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